

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Building 7 (Field Officers Quarters)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-A

HABS
IOWA,
77-DESMO,
24-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 7. Field Officer's Quarters

Building No. 7, situated along the west side of the parade ground northwest of Allen Circle, is the only structure remaining of the several officers' quarters that once existed there. Completed on July 31, 1907, the three-story house quartered one field grade army officer and his family and cost \$13,863.76 to erect. Based on standard plan 145-D in the office of the Quartermaster General, the structure actually comprised a mirror image of that plan and architecturally contained elements of the Classical Revival and Renaissance Revival styles. Its walls are of red brick joined by red-pigmented mortar in running bond, its rusticated foundation of stone and concrete, and its roof of slate. Dimensions of the main building measure 42 feet by 33 feet, and a wing ran 27 feet by 22 feet. The quarters stand nearly 40 feet high.

As erected, the front, rear, and sides of the building had raking cornices with moulded fascia and returned eaves, and there were porches at the front and sides. Porch roofs were hipped and were supported by turned columns. The front and adjoining east side porches were complete with rails and balusters, and had openings beneath, while that on the rear southwest side had only guard rails. Steps leading to the porches on all sides had rails; those at the front and east sides were balustraded. Beneath the porches the foundation was rough-laid limestone. Thirty-two double-hung windows existed above the basement level; those on the front numbered seven, all six lights over two, but of varying dimensions per level. Each window had a flat segmental arch, a plain limestone lug sill and a steel lintel. The doors all have limestone thresholds. Four highly decorative corbeled brick chimneys surmounted the gabled roof, along with one metal ventilator.

Total floor space above the basement consisted of 3646 square feet. As built, room dimensions for each level were as follows:

Basement:

Room, 20' 1" x 24' 10"
Room, 15' 8" x 21' 3"
Room, 18' 2" x 29' 10"
Hall, 21' 8" x 8'

First floor:

Vestibule, 6' 8" x 3' 6"
Hall, 20' 5" x 10' 9"
Parlor, 14' 11" x 18' 3"
Storeroom, 7' x 8'
Pantry, 7' x 11' 5"
Kitchen, 16' 2" x 14' 2"
Hall, 15' 8" x 6' 6"
Library, 13' 5" x 14' 5"
Dining room, 14' 9" x 18' 7"
Passage, 4' x 7'
Hall, 14' 2" x 8'

Second floor:

Hall, 14' 1" x 10' 9"
Passage, 11' x 5' 3"
Bedroom, 14' 8" x 16' 2"
Bedroom, 18' 4" x 12' 3"
Closet, 6' 9" x 2' 6"
Closet, 6' 9" x 2' 6"
Bathroom, 10' 3" x 7'
Bathroom, 8' x 7'
Hall, 19' 6" x 6' 6"
Bedroom, 14' 3" x 13' 5"
Dressing room, 10' 3" x 8'
Bedroom, 14' 2" x 10' 5"
Closet, 5' x 4'
Closet, 5' x 4'
Hall, 8' x 14' 2"

Attic:

Bedroom, 17' 5" x 14' 10"
Closet, 7' 7" x 4' 10"
Bedroom, 13' 5" x 14' 10"
Closet, 6' 3" x 4' 10"

Building No. 7 was equipped with electricity and running water and by the late 1920s contained steam heat radiators. In 1928 a gas range and water heater were installed. Both were replaced in November, 1940.

Average cost of repairs to the quarters between 1907 and 1918 was approximately \$40 per year. That between 1919 and 1922 ran approximately \$154 per year. Today Building No. 7, its porches removed and windows boarded up, is used for storage purposes by the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Science. Many interior features of the structure appear much like they did upon construction, although the exterior has lost much integrity with removal of the porches. Moreover, while the masonry remains in good condition, the exterior wood is deteriorating.(16)

16. Card for Building No. 7. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box 51; Plan, "Quarters for Field Officer," No. 145D, April 1905, April 1906, 7 sheets. NA, RG 77. Cartographic Archives Division; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.